



**International &  
Comparative Education**  
Teachers College, Columbia University

**International & Comparative Education Program  
Integrative Project (IP) Guidelines for Graduation Portfolio**

**Purpose of the Integrative Project (IP)**

The IP is a culminating reflection that demonstrates your intellectual growth throughout the International & Comparative Education Program (MA and EdM tracks). It showcases how your coursework, academic development, and professional aspirations intersect and align with the program's mission and learning goals.

**Portfolio Components**

**1. Integrative & Critical Reflection** (minimum 1800 - maximum 2000 words; excluding references)

Submit a written document that weaves together your intellectual journey, using your selected artifacts as anchors. Your reflection should:

- Provide a brief introduction to each writing sample (course, assignment type, topic)
- Describe how each writing assignment reflects specific learning outcomes
- Discuss how your thinking evolved throughout the program
- Highlight any remaining questions or goals for continued growth
- Connect your learning to your professional or academic aspirations
- Include relevant academic citations

**2. Three Academic Writing Samples**

Select three assignments or final papers from different courses that have meaningfully shaped your thinking. These writing samples should represent:

- Breadth across core and elective courses
- Depth in theoretical, methodological, and/or applied areas
- A connection to your interests or future career path
- At least two of these writing samples should be single authored (i.e., not part of a group project)
- At least one of these writing samples should be from a course offered by the Program
- Writing samples are submitted as-is and should not be revised for this portfolio; however, you may comment on them, contextualize them, and reflect on their development in the Integrative & Critical Reflection paper

**3. Updated resume/CV**

**4. Oral Defense:** The faculty advisor may request an oral defense of your portfolio if there are any concerns.

Submission Guidelines: Send to your faculty advisor in one PDF.

- Once approved, please upload your approved IP and [Permission to View Form HERE](#).



**International &  
Comparative Education**  
Teachers College, Columbia University

### Reflective Questions to Guide Your Writing

1. Which theories, frameworks, or approaches from the program have most shaped how you understand international and comparative education? Why?
2. How do your chosen artifacts demonstrate your growth in using theory, content knowledge, or methods?
3. How have your perspectives on equity, diversity, or social justice in education evolved throughout the program?
4. What tensions, dilemmas, or questions emerged during your studies—and how have you responded to them?
5. How have your skills in research, communication, or leadership developed, and how will you apply them beyond TC?
6. What are the most important things you are taking with you from this program, and what would you still like to learn or explore further?

### Tips for a Strong Integrative Paper

- Be specific: Use direct references to concepts, readings, assignments, or experiences.
- Be personal: Reflect on your growth, challenges, and moments of realization.
- Be connected: Make links between the program’s mission/learning goals and your own development.
- Be forward-looking: Articulate how your learning shapes your future trajectory.
- Since the purpose of this assignment is to hear *your authentic voice*, we discourage the use of AI. (e.g., ChatGPT).
- If you use AI tools to improve word processing or language in your Integrative Paper Reflection, you should include a short statement at the end of your paper describing how the tool was used

### Alternative Formats for the Integrative Project

While the default format for the Integrative Project is a portfolio (as outlined above), students may choose to pursue an alternative format that better aligns with their academic interests, professional goals, or creative inclinations (e.g., research paper, policy analysis, curriculum, etc.) All alternative formats must be approved in advance by the student’s faculty advisor.

### Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation of the IP is based on the quality of the writing, analysis, and research. The quality of writing refers to clarity of language, correct usage of grammar, proper use of academic references. The quality of analysis and research refers to the use of appropriate literature and theory and research methods. The IP will be graded on a Pass/Fail basis by the academic advisor.

### Integrative Project (IP) Evaluation Rubric

**Program:** International & Comparative Education (MA/EdM)

**Grading:** Pass / Fail

**Evaluator:** Faculty Advisor



**International &  
Comparative Education**  
Teachers College, Columbia University

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Meets Expectations (Pass)</b>	<b>Does Not Meet Expectations (Fail)</b>
<b>1. Writing Samples Selection &amp; Relevance (3 total)</b>	Appropriate and relevant choices; demonstrates adequate breadth and depth; generally aligned with stated goals	Samples are missing, irrelevant, or do not reflect sufficient breadth, depth, or relevance
<b>2. Resume/CV</b>	Updated and adequately formatted; shows development of relevant skills and experience	Outdated, poorly formatted, or does not reflect program-related experience
<b>3. Integrative &amp; Critical Reflection: Structure &amp; Clarity</b>	Well-structured and mostly clear; ideas are easy to follow with minor lapses	Disorganized, unclear, or hard to follow; lacks coherence
<b>4. Integration of Writing Samples into Reflection</b>	Adequate integration; explains how artifacts reflect learning outcomes and development	Little to no integration; lacks explanation of significance or connection to learning
<b>5. Intellectual Growth &amp; Learning Outcomes</b>	Demonstrates growth and understanding of learning outcomes; some evolution of thought evident	Limited or unclear evidence of intellectual growth or engagement with learning outcomes
<b>6. Connection to Program Mission and Goals</b>	Makes a reasonable connection to the mission and learning goals	No meaningful connection to program mission or goals



**International &  
Comparative Education**  
Teachers College, Columbia University

<b>7. Engagement with Theory, Method, and Practice</b>	Adequate discussion of key theories/methods; some evidence of application	Minimal or incorrect use of theoretical/methodological frameworks
<b>8. Reflection on Equity, Diversity, Social Justice</b>	Reasonable engagement with concepts of equity and justice; some self-reflection	Superficial or absent discussion of diversity, equity, or social justice
<b>9. Future Goals &amp; Professional Application</b>	Goals are present and generally align with the reflection and program outcomes	Goals are vague, absent, or misaligned with program experience
<b>10. Use of Academic Sources and Citations</b>	Appropriate use of sources; citations mostly correct	Few or inappropriate sources; citation errors
<b>11. Quality of Writing &amp; Language</b>	Generally well-written with minor errors; appropriate academic tone	Poorly written, frequent grammatical issues, unclear or unprofessional tone
<b>12. AI Usage Disclosure (if applicable)</b>	Disclosed appropriately and does not compromise the integrity of the reflection	Use of AI is not disclosed or misrepresented

---

**Overall Evaluation**

- **Pass** (All criteria at minimum meet "Meets Expectations")  
**Fail** (One or more criteria fall in "Does Not Meet Expectations")

---

**Notes / Feedback Section (to be completed by faculty advisor):**

*(Strengths, suggestions for continued development, and—if applicable—recommendations following an oral defense.)*



**International &  
Comparative Education**  
Teachers College, Columbia University

### COMPLETING THE IP CHECKLIST

1. Submit the IP to your faculty advisor by the deadline.
2. Include the following statement on your cover page (a sample cover page is available [here](#)):  
*Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts (or Master of Education) in International Educational Development (or Comparative and International Education) at Teachers College, Columbia University*
3. As per New York State requirements, submit the final approved copy to the Program Office. Please complete the Permission to View form and upload both your approved IP and the form [here](#).

### Alternative Formats for the Integrative Project

While the default format for the Integrative Project is a portfolio (as outlined above), students may choose to pursue an alternative format that better aligns with their academic interests, professional goals, or creative inclinations (e.g., research paper, policy analysis, curriculum, etc.) All alternative formats must be approved in advance by the student's faculty advisor. Students are required to discuss their projects with their advisors and obtain advisors' approval before undertaking the projects. Advisors are required to review project outlines before signing degree application forms.

**(1) Empirical research paper or proposal:** Empirical research provides an opportunity for students to design and conduct a small, original study that relates both to International and Comparative Education but also to each student's concentration. The IP will include a clearly stated purpose of the study (including critical research questions, aims of the study, and why this study matters to the field of CIE); a literature review; the methodological framework (clearly justifying why these have been chosen and are best suited for the study); an analysis of empirical data (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods) in relation to the research question and methodology; and a discussion of the data analysis in relation to the scholarship the study draws on and to which it contributes. Data can be derived from primary or secondary sources. The IP will make concluding remarks and suggest future research in relation to International and Comparative Education and the student's concentration. Length: 8,000 words.

**(2) Theoretical exploration:** Critical theories provide starting points for rethinking what constitutes knowledge and how this knowledge is connected to the educational realities we seek to understand. Draw on existing critical theories and perspectives to assess, highlight, or rethink the knowledge produced within the field of international and comparative education. For example, a paper might provide a critical assessment of education privatization by applying a critical perspective that questions the tenets of neoliberal school reform policies. Or, a paper might critique practices and pedagogies of an educational program that privileges Eurocentric middle-class values over the funds of knowledge held by migrant or culturally marginalized youth. Finally, a paper might use postcolonial theory to break down the myths of internal homogeneity that nation-states use to legitimize one group's cultural and linguistic practices over others. Length: 8,000 words.

**(3) Policy study:** A policy study will provide an opportunity for students to engage in a key policy space in the field of International and Comparative Education. The IP will include background on a well-defined problem, analyze existing research (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods), present various policy options and their implications, and identify key policy



**International &  
Comparative Education**  
Teachers College, Columbia University

actors and stakeholders that are involved in the policy debate or reform. The social, political, economic, and cultural dimensions of a policy should also be discussed. The Policy IP should contain an Executive Summary and relevant figures, maps, and graphs. Length: 8,000 words.

**(4) Curriculum design and development:** A curriculum-focused IP will provide an opportunity for students to gain curriculum development skills materials in response to a clear need in the International and Comparative Education field. Students can choose to write a *curriculum design paper*, which includes an extensive research paper and sample curriculum module. The paper will consist of an abstract, introduction, context (if developed for a specific location/program), rationale for curriculum (based on needs assessment data or other research if available), conceptual framework for curriculum (drawing on curriculum development theories, curriculum design choices and key principles, including scope and sequence) limitations. The accompanying curriculum module will include 1-3 page outline, table or other “snapshot” of a module or session to illustrate a sample of what a more extensive curriculum might contain once fully developed. Or, students may choose to create a *Curriculum Development Project*, which includes a shorter research paper (Length: 5,000 words) and a fully developed curriculum that includes the overarching goals and learning objectives, activities, assessment strategies, and other required materials for successfully executing the curriculum. Curriculum materials may be developed for students, teachers and/or facilitators. Length: 8,000 words. (*Length of the curriculum will depend on the type of curriculum and duration of course/training and should be agreed upon with your advisor*).

Other types of writing projects may also be accepted pending consultation and approval from your advisor.

**General Guidelines for Alternative IP Formats to Follow:**

1. Define your paper around a specific topic or problem that is of interest to you. Try to avoid writing a description of a topic like “development objectives of non-governmental agencies.” If you were to select this broad topic, think about what interests you the most about it. What is the most controversial aspect discussed in the courses you have taken and covered in the readings? What are the theoretical and practical issues surrounding the topic? Another option would be to select a specific project and discuss how your course work has broadened your understanding of the role of NGOs in development processes.
2. All of the options described above should include a review of relevant literature. If you choose options 1 or 2, then the bulk of the paper will be a review of the literature organized around a thesis statement, or major argument, you are seeking to support. If you choose option 3, the integrated project will have a concise literature review along with additional written and/or visual material.
3. The integrative project should include a title page, abstract, table of contents, reference list, and appendices (if relevant), and it should be in accordance with the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, which includes no spelling errors, grammatical mistakes, or typos. It is recommended that the IP be between 25-30 pages long (exclusive of references, appendices, and other components).
4. An outline of the paper should be presented to your advisor before the deadline. You should have your advisor’s approval on the topic, content, and structure of your integrated project. Dates for the first and final drafts of IPs are listed on the next page.
5. Peer Advisors are **not** editors and should not be asked to proofread your paper; they can help



## **International & Comparative Education**

Teachers College, Columbia University

develop your ideas and assist in structuring your IP. It is highly recommended that you form a writing group and exchange drafts with your peers to receive initial edits. If you require further assistance, please discuss it with your advisor or seek assistance at the [Teachers College Graduate Writing Center](#) (GWC) at Thorndike Hall, Room 162 ([writingcenter@tc.edu](mailto:writingcenter@tc.edu) or 212-678-3789).